



**Chief Executive's Department  
Legal and Democratic Services**  
Governance Services  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor (West)  
Civic Hall  
Leeds LS1 1UR

To: All Members of Council

Contact Name: Kevin Tomkinson  
e-mail: [Kevin.tomkinson@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Kevin.tomkinson@leeds.gov.uk)  
Direct Line: (0113) 247 4357  
Fax: (0113) 3951599

Your ref:  
Our Ref: A61/kjt/quest

Date: April 2012

Dear Councillor

### **COUNCIL MEETING – 28<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2012**

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 11 to 24 unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q12 Councillor Bentley to the Executive Member (Children's Services) - Does the Executive Board Member for Children's Services agree that attendance continues to be an obsession of this Council?

A The simple answer is 'yes' – it is absolutely right that attendance remains one of our 'obsessions'. Our truancy figures currently put Leeds performance 130<sup>th</sup> out of 149 local authorities. That is not acceptable to any of us.

The position in Leeds is that whilst the vast majority of children in Leeds do attend school regularly without the need for any additional or targeted support, there remains a significant cohort of children in Leeds who miss an unacceptable amount of school.

Members will know from the data that has recently been shared across Area Committees, that there is evidence of improvement. But there are clear links between attendance and other outcomes that affect young people's life chances – such as attainment, being NEET and Youth Offending – so it is critical that we do more.

The reasons for irregular school attendance are complex. Through research into the reasons for persistent absence in Leeds, young people have told us that key factors include: problems at home and with parents; issues with the curriculum and lessons; and bullying.

Given that problems are often located in a child's home, family circumstances and the wider community, we need partners across the whole system to help us address this. That is why we are focusing on local, targeted approaches through our cluster model of working. This includes:-

- So far 23 out of 27 clusters have undertaken a multi-agency Outcomes Based Accountability exercise and action plan on attendance.
- Clusters are utilising a Top 100 approach to identifying families in need and increasing the number of Common Assessments that have been completed for those vulnerable families.
- Clusters are engaging a range of local services in “Guidance and Support” meetings to both co-ordinate interventions and provide advice and guidance to practitioners which maximises the effective use of resources and steers the right services to the right families.

Building on these local initiatives we will increasingly work with a range of partners to promote the importance of school attendance and work restoratively with young people for whom persistent absence is a problem.

Q13 Councillor E Taylor to the Executive Member (Environmental Services) - Would the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services inform Members of the work being undertaken by the Council’s street cleanliness team in the city centre?

A Resource arrangements:-

- Field staff total of 40 staff ( 20 on duty every day x 7 days per week).
- Staff coverage 24 hrs per day. Mechanical sweeping from 22.00 –8.30 (3 staff 7 days per week )
- 6 vehicles deployed
- De-litterers use a street barrow which carries brushes etc for detailed cleaning
- 2 dedicated enforcement staff operate within the city centre who’s role is to tackle Environmental and Highways Enforcement- they deal with Fly tipping, commercial premise Duty of Care, Littering, public and private land issues, Placards, fly posting, Graffiti, Leaflet distribution.

Litterbin refurbishment- We are currently in the process of replacing defective and unsightly litter-bins throughout the city centre. We have managed to do this through competitive procurement and within current budgets.

We are in the early stages of developing a series of improved standards for the city centre which will be zoned into Platinum- Gold- Silver-Bronze areas to prioritise cleansing resources and to ensure the priority areas are dealt with as such. The timing, frequency and location of cleansing activities has been reviewed in order to maximise the current resource available. City centre businesses and City Centre Management have influenced this significantly.

All gulleys within the city have been serviced in the last few months and any defects have been referred to colleagues in Highways.

A range of new equipment and vehicles have been trialled in the city centre in 2012 to identify more effective and efficient cleansing practice.

Enforcement staff have so far in 2012 served 28 legal notices requiring businesses to properly contain their trade waste, 24 notices requiring business to prove how they dispose of their trade waste and there are 8 pending or recently heard prosecutions for more serious offences (breaches of waste containment, fly tipping etc). 78 FPN’s have been issued for littering and 5 FPN’s for un authorised flyering.

Sixteen Litter clearing notices have been serviced on private land occupiers enforcing them to clear their land, 23 notices served on domestic residents for not containing waste correctly, 10 Street litter Control notices pending served on businesses whose litter affects public land ( eg Fast food outlets )

Partnership working is paramount to delivering a successful city centre and strong connections have been made with other partners in the city centre such as: PEPU, Highways, CCM ( City Centre Management ) West Yorkshire Police Multi task forum, Leeds Retail Association, Pub Watch, Events Management and Markets. We are also now using and are members of BACIL which is Business Against Crime in Leeds and all key staff and Supervisors now carry two way radio's and share instant response/ referrals to deal with littering and anti social behaviour issues where appropriate.

Businesses have responded positively to the above, some of which has been provided as a direct result of requests from city centre businesses. The idea of a city centre charter is being pursued, with each sector encouraged to commit to a range of contributions which collectively continue to improve cleanliness in the city.

Q14 Councillor Bruce to the Executive Member (Adult Health and Social Care) - Could the Executive Member for Adult Health and Social Care please comment on the implications of the Health and Social Care Bill?

A Members will know of the Government's proposals to reform the NHS in England and that the Health and Social Care Bill has now completed its marathon passage through the Westminster Parliament and is awaiting Royal assent.

Over 1000 amendments were made to the Bill, leaving a confused mess and severe concerns about the future of the NHS. The views of numerous professional bodies were dismissed by the Government, including, to name a few, those of the BMA, the Royal College of Nursing, the Royal College of GPs, the Royal College of Midwives, the Royal College of Radiologists, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Royal College of Surgeons and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

I too have severe concerns about what the implementation of the Bill will mean for healthcare in Leeds. I am concerned that the Bill promotes increased competition between healthcare providers and will allow hospitals to earn up to 49% of their income from private patients.

I am concerned that this could lead to fragmentation, with some hospitals potentially failing and the creation of a two-tier service in some areas. There is a very real worry that this could mean access to good health care will depend on where you live and how much you can afford to pay.

I am concerned that the Bill risks damaging the relationship between GPs and their patients. If a situation arises where a GP is responsible for commissioning services, but also has a financial interest in the outcome of those commissioning decisions, there is a danger a patient's trust in their GPs decisions could be undermined.

I am concerned that the NHS is being asked to implement a massive re-organisation, that some have described as being so big it's visible from space, at a time when it also has to make unprecedented financial efficiency savings.

I am concerned that all of this is being done despite neither coalition partners mentioning their plans to the public before the last general election.

Whilst there are many things to be concerned about, the reality is, despite overwhelming professional and public opposition, the Bill has been passed.

We now have to work with what we have got to protect the NHS and ensure we do all we can to see the best health care possible delivered to people in Leeds.

We need to work constructively on the Health and Wellbeing Board, through the Scrutiny Board and through Healthwatch. We need to work with our health partners to ensure the continuation of a comprehensive service for the city, where access will be based on need and not on how much you can afford to pay. We need to make the most of the transfer of public health and health improvement responsibilities to local authorities. I think we all agree that Councils know their populations and are well placed to tackle the huge variety of factors that contribute to poor health and the scandal of health inequalities. Many of our services can contribute to tackling this and help more people in Leeds live longer and healthier lives.

Our ability to do this will, of course, depend on whether sufficient Government funding comes to the Council along with the new responsibilities.

Q15 Councillor G Latty to the Executive Member (Development and the Economy) - When does the Executive Board Member for City Development and the Economy envisage making a final decision on proposals to install a taxi rank on Whitehouse Lane to serve Leeds Bradford International Airport?

A The Executive Board on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012 agreed the need to secure a more flexible and inclusive approach towards taxi access at the airport and urged for an holistic and satisfying resolution, befitting the airports status. To that end, as part of a previous planning permission relation to the extension of the airport terminal, the Airport Authority is required to submit and have an approved forecourt management plan. No development approved by the permission should be commenced until the plan is approved. The forecourt management plan will need to illustrate how the terminal and forecourt facilities caters for and facilitates the movement of passengers and visitors to and from the airport. The timetable for this is that they need to submit details and they will need to be approved by the Plans Panel before they can commence work on the exterior of the terminal building.

Q16 Councillor Pryke to the Executive Member (Environmental Services) - Can the Executive Member for Environmental Services provide reassurance that the decision to give staff in the refuse service 30 days leave in lieu as part of return to work arrangements is not having a negative impact on the service at present, and does he intend to give the same amount of days off to the other staff in his department?

A From the question posed there has been a misunderstanding regarding terms and conditions for refuse staff. For clarity, time off in lieu (TOIL) is part of the Green Book (National Conditions of Service) which came into effect as a result of the pay and grading (Job Evaluation) agreement, prior to discussions on improving operational efficiencies through the Return to Work Agreement of 2009. TOIL is also applied to Household waste sort site (HWSS) staff and Cleansing staff so those staff also accrue the extra days leave. There is a total, per year, of up to 32 days leave ( including TOIL) per individual.

Operational staff within the refuse service are entitled to 17 days annual leave rising to 21 days annual leave following 5 years' service. There are a total of 8 bank holidays that are classified as normal working days for the Refuse Service, plus up to 3 substitute bank holidays depending on the Christmas calendar. Lieu days are accrued by employees working on a bank holiday as part of their rota work pattern. The conditions of service provide for additional time plus a lieu day for rostered bank holiday days.

The service ensures that all employees are treated fairly and consistently without impacting on the service's ability to deliver an efficient and effective service. A number of lieu days have

been accrued by operational staff, where it has not been operationally possible for staff to take these days and ensure appropriate cover either through overtime or the use of agency staff.

Consideration is to be given to address any build of historical lieu days without having a detrimental impact upon operations.

Q17 Councillor G Hyde to the Executive Member (Development and the Economy) - Please could the Executive Member for Development & Economy provide an update to Council on how the exciting Leeds Arena and Trinity Leeds developments are progressing?

A Leeds Arena - I am pleased to be able to report that work on the £60 million, 12,500 seat entertainment focused Leeds Arena which commenced on site in May 2011, remains on course to be completed in April 2013, with the first event envisaged in July 2013.

Construction of the main steel frame will be complete in early April and, the building will be watertight in July. All the pre-cast terracing is due to be completed by the end of May, with the first seats to be installed in the auditorium at the beginning of June 2012.

There are currently over 150 personnel on site representing around 10 companies. Employment numbers are scheduled to rise dramatically in the next 2-3 months as the main mechanical and electrical works start. To date 26 jobs have been created for residents in the city whilst 88 jobs have been safeguarded as a result of the construction works. 62 Leeds based businesses have been engaged on the project to date and BAM continue to work with city partners to ensure as many jobs are recruited locally as possible.

It is encouraging to note that neighbouring property owners continue to bring forward development proposals to complement the arena. As a consequence of the arena development, it is estimated that over £125 million of new and refurbished development will come forward in the next 2-3 years in the area immediately surrounding the Leeds Arena.

Trinity Leeds - Trinity Leeds is the UK's only major retail-led and leisure development, which opens in spring 2013. Trinity Leeds is set to boost Leeds from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> position in the retail spend rankings just behind London, Glasgow and Birmingham. It contains 120 retail units and a strong leisure and restaurant offer in a £350m, 1million Sq ft city centre development.

With just around one year to opening, Trinity Leeds remains on programme for a spring 2013 opening.

With the full construction programme underway up to 1000 people will be employed throughout the construction phase and a major training programme is in place to provide the tools for up-skilling & apprenticeships. Land Securities are in detailed discussions with LCC around the creation of a skills academy to support 3500 new retail related roles that the scheme will provide once open.

Trinity Leeds is in a unique position currently. It has confirmed that as at March 2012, the scheme is 66% pre-let and in solicitors' hands. This is a strong lettings position for a development a year ahead of opening, particularly given the current economic climate.

The scheme will lift the night time leisure offering in Leeds city centre and is expected to draw additional visitors from the region and beyond.

Q18 Councillor Driver to the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Housing and Regeneration) - Is the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Regeneration as concerned as I am that the Government's welfare reforms are driving up homelessness?

A Homeless presentations to the Leeds Housing Options Service (principal Council offering housing advice to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness) have risen by around 36% since 2008/09: 12,500 inquiries in 2008/09 compared to a forecast of 17,000 in 2011/12. The economic downturn has had a significant impact on people's capacity to maintain and secure affordable and suitable housing options and it is likely that welfare reform will exacerbate this situation. It is estimated that 9-10,000 social housing tenants (including 7,000 Council tenants) could have their housing benefit entitlement reduced because of new under occupancy rules. The extension of the single room rate for shared accommodation to include people aged up to 35 will mean that 1800 25-34 year olds who had been receiving the 1 bedroom self contained housing benefit rate are now or will imminently receive the housing benefit subsidy relating to the cost of living in a shared house. This could equate to a reduction in benefit of £37.73 per week (figures correct for March 12). There is little doubt that people experiencing reductions in housing benefit subsidy will find it more difficult to pay their current rental costs or to find new suitable housing and it is likely that this will lead to increased presentations to the Leeds Housing Options Service.

The impact of welfare reform has been compounded by a reduction in the Supporting People grant Leeds receives from Government: the grant covers the cost of supported housing services for some of the most vulnerable people in society. The Government has reduced the Supporting People grant from £31m in 2010/11 to just over £21m in 2011/12. The Council has been able in 11/12 to partly mitigate this reduction by finding just under £7m from other resources but this is an extremely difficult position to maintain.

The Council has re-stated its commitment to minimise homelessness despite these challenges. It is intended that 8 housing advisor posts will be recruited to the Leeds Housing Options Service in the next few weeks and key homeless prevention initiatives, such as the Sanctuary scheme and Youth Mediation Service, will continue to be funded.

1 bedroom self contained - £99.23 per week  
Shared Room rate - £61.50 per week

Q19 Councillor Lamb to the Leader of Council - Does the Leader of Council agree with recent comments made by the UNITE General Secretary, Len McCluskey, when he called for the public to engage in civil disobedience during the Olympics?

A No.

Q20 Councillor Chastney to the Executive Member (Development and the Economy) - Will the Executive Member for Development please update Council on the outcome of the West Park Centre options appraisal?

A The West Park Centre options appraisal is still ongoing. As stated in my response to Councillor Chastney at Council in January, officers are still investigating the benefits of each option for users and the local community, as well as looking at each option's business case. I expect the options appraisal to be completed in the summer and a report submitted to Executive Board in July.

Q21 Councillor Fox to the Leader of Council - Following the recent review of postal votes in force for five years and over, what does the Leader of Council make of the fact that the Gipton and Harehills Ward has lost no less than 890 net or 18.7% of the postal votes in force in May 2011 as compared with an average 4.9% for the other 32 Council wards, and the 2.7% average loss experienced by the five Wards represented wholly by Conservative Councillors which amounts to just one seventh of the Gipton and Harehills figure?

A Under the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) must, by 31 January each year, send every person who remains an absent voter and whose signature held on the personal identifiers record is more than five

years old a notice requiring them to provide a fresh signature if they wish to remain an absent voter.

Electors who have failed to respond must have their postal vote removed from the absent voting list and be sent a letter including:

- Notification of cancellation of their postal vote
- The fact that they are now registered as a polling station elector
- The location of their polling station
- Their entitlement to reapply for a postal vote
- A fresh postal vote application form
- A pre-paid envelope

January 2012 saw the first refresh exercise take place, as the initial collection of personal identifiers took place in January 2007. 55,385 PI refresh forms were sent out in January and by the March deadline 6,877 electors had failed to respond.

The 6,877 people who did not respond remain registered electors, however by not responding to the PI form they have opted to vote in person at their polling station unless we are notified otherwise before the 18 April deadline for new applications to vote by post.

In the Gipton & Harehills ward, 842 of the 2,534 postal voters who were contacted failed to respond to the collection notice. This has seen a reduction of the number of postal voters in the ward from 4,750 at the May 2011 elections, to 3,860 as of 1 March. There will also be a change in figures following the annual canvass and from death notifications. The electorate in the ward at the start of the exercise was 16,388. The current electorate as of 1 March is 16,405.

It is the case that the Gipton and Harehills Ward has seen the largest reduction in its postal votes of all the Council wards. However, it is impossible to analyse the many and varied reasons why individual electors would fail to respond to the refresh exercise. Similarly, it is difficult to speculate on the different level of returns in various wards of the Council.

Q22 Councillor Cleasby to the Executive Member (Development and the Economy) - Does the Executive Member for Development believe that the city is best served by the Director spending time abroad, rather than solving the problems in his department?

A Leeds is a major city in the UK which can at times necessitate the need for the Council to have appropriate representation abroad.

Q23 Councillor Marjoram to the Leader of Council - Now that Hackney Carriages are to be allowed to use bus lanes in Leeds, against the wishes of cyclists, will the Leader of Council guarantee that there are no plans, both now and in the future, to allow private hire taxis to use bus lanes?

A Detailed proposals are being developed to amend the existing traffic regulation orders to permit hackney carriages into the city's bus lanes. As part of the analysis undertaken and the experience of other highway authorities it was concluded that the admission of hackney carriages into the city's bus lanes will not significantly adversely impact on the successful operation of bus services in Leeds. There are over 4,000 registered private hire vehicles in Leeds compared to 537 hackney carriages. Work undertaken has shown that any further relaxations to the categories of traffic allowed in bus lanes would have an increasingly adverse affect on the operation of bus services and the conditions for cyclists. Hackney carriages are clearly distinguished from private cars, due to being marked with their own distinctive white and black liveries. This ensures enforcement can be readily undertaken and there is no confusion from other road users as to who may use the bus lanes. Given this evidence there are no proposals to allow private hire vehicles to use bus lanes.

Q24 Councillor Harrand to the Leader of Council - Will the Leader of Council confirm that Labour party activists and trade unionists will be campaigning again this year for a Liberal Democrat Chair of the West Yorkshire Fire Authority, even if the Labour Party has a majority on that authority?

A It is up to West Yorkshire Fire Authority members to elect their Chair.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Tomkinson  
Principal Governance Officer